

Hi from Sydney!

I'm here to be part of lots of different events and connection, for quite a bit of speaking, but also for lots of listening too.

I arrived on Friday night, and I'm staying with my brother, his partner and their three teenage girls.

So amongst lots of deep existential discussions, and improvised singing around the piano, (the two favourite pastimes of our family) my official itinerary includes:

- Filming for Olive media's Family series on parenting. a follow up to their Men's series
- Speaking at the First Fruits Preschool Ministries Conference
- Catching up with DJ Konz from Compassion, one of the front runner thinkers in the Child Theology Movement, who was a copresenter with me in Nairobi earlier this year
- Sharing Devotions with the Baptist Union of New South Wales Staff, and speaking at a gathering to encourage and support baptist children & families practitioners and pastors
- Lecturing at the Baptist College
- Meeting with the Uniting Church Godly play and messy church advocate
- Speaking at the Anglican Youthworks Children and Families ministry

Reflecting on the range of topics and contexts and flavours of ministry and confessional traditions and levels of engagements I am struck by the diversity on the one hand, and by the integration of it all, from encouraging first time parents in a studio audience to critiquing our strongest theological resources so far with a doctoral candidate.

It all somehow hangs together, in the kingdom of God, don't ask me how. Every one of these conversations and encounters is sacred, in the sense of our openness to God's transforming power. And its not because i'm doing "ministry" things. The same is true of the weeks that are filled with school musicals, and hockey training and texting prayers to a friend and answering emails, and running in the park. Organic life, stretching many directions and dimensions, scattered and lumpy with lots of starts and quite a few stops, is how the kingdom comes. When we live in the proclamation that Jesus is Lord, it means the kind of devotion to acknowledging that no part of life is godforsaken. Jesus, Lord of all, redeems our whole life, paying the bills, cleaning the bathroom, meeting clients and training for footy.

So as I look and listen for the kingdom in my life here north of the border this week, I pray for you, too. Let God's kingdom come, and lets us have eyes to see it and hearts to embrace it.

Grace & Peace, Beth

children  
& families

TO: You

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FROM: Beth Barnett

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